

Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Symposium Bulletin



2003 Symposium Highlights: Encore Sessions

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How Asthma-Friendly is Your School?

Managing asthma can be a challenge for schools, but it can best be accomplished through a comprehensive plan that addresses both medical and environmental management and encourages communication between parents and the school health department. Since children spend a majority of their time in schools, it is important to reduce their exposure to environmental asthma triggers commonly found in school buildings. Dr. Lani Wheeler, a Medical Officer for the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Adolescent and School Health in Annapolis, Maryland, conducted this session by first offering an overview of asthma and of factors essential to effective asthma management in any setting. Dr. Wheeler explained how schools can manage asthma using a Coordinated School Health Program: establish management and support systems for "asthma-friendly" schools, provide appropriate health services, provide a safe and healthy school environment, provide asthma education and awareness programs for students and staff, provide all students with safe and enjoyable physical education classes and integrate school and family efforts to manage asthma.



Media Strategies and Publicizing IAQ TFS Successes

Effective communication within a school community, including students, staff, administration, parents, the media, local businesses and service providers, neighboring school districts, activists, and city/county/state personnel, can be a determining factor in the success of any IAQ program. Ginger Cruz, Vice President of Government and Public Affairs for MELE Associates in Rockville, Maryland, conducted this session and provided invaluable information on the key stages in communicating with the media and how to strategically and effectively relay the truth of a school's story in a positive light. She explained how to reach the media and common media scenarios that can arise from an unfortunate situation. She offered guidance on dealing with the media if a negative story is released regarding the school, if a crisis erupts from such a story, and if a mistake was made in the story. She also emphasized the value of using school public information or communications offices for dealing with media matters.



Basics of Mold in Schools



Mold on bread may not seem like a big deal, but mold in schools is a very serious problem. Exposure to mold in schools can trigger allergic reactions that can have a lasting impact on the health and comfort of students and staff. Dr. John Martyny, Associate Professor for the National Jewish Medical and Research Center in Denver, Colorado, conducted this session. He provided an in-depth review of several topics relating to mold, such as different types of mold that can be found in schools and other public buildings and causes of mold in a building. He recommended guidelines for eliminating mold sources in schools, which were collected from the New York City Department of Health, the EPA's "Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings" guidance document, and the American Conference of Government Industrial Hygienists. Dr. Martyny also explained how to protect building occupants from exposure to mold spores during remediation activities. He discussed common health symptoms and illnesses that may occur in building occupants who have been exposed to toxic mold spores and that may indicate the presence of mold.

Financing Indoor Air Quality Solutions

Are you faced with a shrinking budget or competing against other issues for funding an IAQ program in your school or district? Don't worry! Julio Rovi, a Senior Associate and Engineer for The Cadmus Group, Inc., in Orlando, Florida, helped participants answer questions on financing large and small ticket items for school renovations and improvement projects. Mr. Rovi presented essential information on the basics of school financing, including a general overview of school budgets: how they are structured, approved, and allocated, how financial decisions are made in a school district, and how to get buy-in and approval for funding IAQ projects from school officials. Mr. Rovi also provided examples of funding sources available to schools for indoor air quality projects: emergency funds, maintenance budgets, capital money requests, grants, rebates, incentives, Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZAB), lease/lease-purchase agreements with industry vendors, foundation funding, and third-party financing. He directed participants to a few Web sites that offer funding information and urged participants to begin working with funding organizations to establish partnerships and build support for anticipated IAQ projects in their school districts.



